ANNOUNCEMENT OF LEADERSHIP VA 2007

1. PURPOSE. Leadership VA (LVA) is designed to identify 70 leaders in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and to provide an enrichment of their career development through an intense leadership training experience. The program's general goals are to:

a. Identify unusually fine leadership talent in VA;

b. Expand the participants' leadership skills and provide them the opportunity to become acquainted with VA's top leaders and to develop keener insight into the internal and external forces which affect the Department;

c. Provide for an exchange of information and viewpoints, which will broaden personal and professional perspectives, and lay a foundation for a network of VA leaders who share a deep commitment to VA and to public service in its broadest sense.

2. GENERAL. Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, Other Key Officials, Deputy Assistant Secretaries, and field facility Directors are responsible for the following actions:

a. Ensuring that the program is called to the attention of all employees who occupy non-temporary, fulltime positions at or above grade GS-13 and equivalent Title 38 levels (includes Veterans Canteen Service employees). Additionally, field facility Directors are required to ensure this announcement is prominently posted for a minimum of 30 days. Title 38 equivalency to GS-13 for purposes of qualifying for LVA are defined by VA occupation as: Nurse - Grade IV; Physician - Intermediate; Dentist - Intermediate; Podiatrist - Intermediate; Optometrist - Intermediate; Chiropractor – Intermediate; and Physician Assistant - Chief.

b. In keeping with the Department's strong commitment to equal employment opportunity, taking affirmative action to ensure that qualified minority, female, and disabled employees are encouraged to apply.

3. APPLICATION CRITERIA

a. Any employee occupying a position at or above grade GS-13 and equivalent Title 38 levels may apply. Applications are specifically invited from qualified minority, women, and disabled employees. LVA seeks individuals from all elements of VA who are having or who may have significant impact on the future of the Department. Applicants should be high achievers who have demonstrated leadership, success, career progression, and who are active contributors to the community of which they are a part.

In light of VA's significant investment in the LVA program, selected LVA participants are encouraged to remain with VA for five years after graduation.

b. Because of the limited program capacity (approximately 70 participants), competition will be keen. Those who believe personal or work considerations will necessitate their missing a program session, or large portion thereof, should not apply this year.

4. TRAVEL FUNDING AND EXPENSES. As agreed by the VA Education and Training Board, sponsoring offices in VACO will pay travel, lodging, and per diem for their participants, <u>except for VHA participants</u>. <u>Based upon decentralization of VHA travel funds, VHA sponsoring facilities are expected to provide travel funding for their LVA participants.</u> Additionally, LVA operates on limited resources, therefore applicants are advised that if they are selected, each LVA participant and staff are required to contribute incidental fees for each one week session of LVA. These fees, which average $125 per weeklong session, are non-reimbursable by travel vouchers and cover activities such as coffee breaks at hotels and non-contract meals.

5. APPLICATION PROCEDURES. Any eligible VA employee may submit an application. The procedures for obtaining, completing, and submitting applications are:

a. Applications for the 2007 program (VA Form 6-9987) are available for field employees from their Human Resources Office. VACO employees may obtain forms in 1575 Eye Street, Suite 501 or by calling (202) 501-3415.

b. An MS Word template of this form is available for download from the VA Intranet pages at http://10.190.0.50/Sites/valu/1108. Applications using a font size less than 10-point size for narrative responses are not acceptable. Responses to information requested on the application must not exceed the 7 pages provided in VAF 6-9987. Previous years' application forms may be used, but should be marked LVA 2007.

c. Applicants should forward completed, printed applications to their supervisors.

d. Supervisors should complete the section of the application on page 6 entitled "Supervisor's Endorsement," to include signature and date.

e. All completed application packages from both field and Central Office personnel should be forwarded to their respective Central Office element, except VHA. (VHA employees see instructions in subparagraph f.) All packages, including VHA, must be received by **October 4, 2006**. For example, Regional Counsel employees will forward their applications to the General Counsel (02). Applications received after October 4, 2006, will not be considered. (Please do not send applications that have not been signed or completely filled out.)

f. Veterans Health Administration. Note: VHA employees must also attach a copy of the final (summary) rating page from their most recent performance appraisal. VHA applicants are advised that the following attachments are not required: special performance award documentation, resumes, and CVs – such attachments will not be considered. VHA requires that employees in the field route their applications through the field facility Director prior to being submitted to: Employee Education Resource Center, VA Medical Center (OOR/B), 10000 Brecksville Road, Brecksville, Ohio 44141, Fax (440) 838-6034. A copy of the signed application must also be separately forwarded to the appropriate Network Director.

g. Continuing delays in delivery of mail by the US Postal Service may result in applications being received after the closing date. Applicants may want to consider alternative methods of delivery to ensure the timely delivery of their application

h. In the event of a "last minute" submission, the application may be faxed to the appropriate receiving office. However, the signed, original application must arrive at the receiving office within two business days but NLT COB, October 6, 2006.
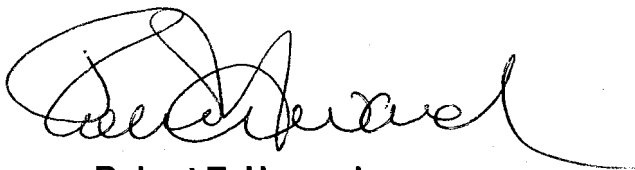
7. PROGRAM DATES AND LOCATIONS. We anticipate having four one-week sessions at different sites. <u>If this training schedule is problematic to potential applicants, we recommend they not apply</u>. We make every effort to coordinate these session dates so as not to conflict with major VA meetings. Sessions are tentatively planned, subject to approval by the VA Education and Training Board:

         I.   Philadelphia, PA   April 15 - 20, 2007

         II.   Washington, DC   June 11 - 15, 2007

         III.   St. Louis, MO   September 17 - 21, 2007

         IV.   Baltimore, MD   November 5 - 9, 2007

8. INQUIRIES. Inquiries about Leadership VA may be directed to Elona Williams, LVA Program Support Assistant, at (202) 501-3415 or by e-mail. You may also contact the LVA Executive Director, Michael K. Brenny at 202-501-3436.
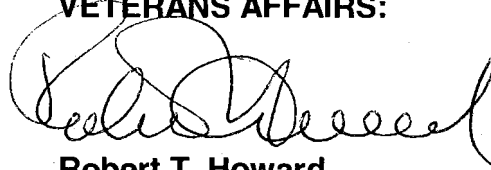
9. RESCISSION. This notice is rescinded February 28, 2008; however, the information reflected will remain in effect.

CERTIFIED BY: **BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS:**

Robert T. Howard   **Robert T. Howard**
Senior Advisor to the Deputy Secretary   **Senior Advisor to the Deputy Secretary**
Supervisor, Office of Information and   **Supervisor, Office of Information and**
Technology   **Technology**

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Leadership VA - Tips for Writing a Good Application

1. Remember that **Leadership VA** (LVA) is a program for employees from all organizational elements of VA, nationwide. Therefore, keep the focus of your application broad-based. Develop your ideas with knowledge of VA as a whole, but use examples from your specific experience and setting.

2. Because each LVA class is a "VA in miniature," the selection panels value diversity, not just gender, racial, or cultural diversity but also organizational, professional, educational, and geographic diversity.

3. A strong application not only shows that you are a leader in your work environment, but also shows commitment to community, education and continuous learning, along with a broad understanding of, and commitment to, the entire mission of VA.

4. Remember, this is **Leadership VA**; your application should be professional and polished to demonstrate that you are a leader. Type or complete the application in Microsoft Word, using the template from web addressees provided in the VA Notice.

5. Communicate clearly and <u>concisely</u>. Check grammar and spelling before you print and submit.

6. Do not use terms, acronyms, or technical jargon that others will have difficulty identifying with or understanding.

7. If you need to attach a page or two for completeness, that's acceptable, but the reviewers do not want to see copies of publications, resumes, or other materials.

8. If you are not selected for **Leadership VA** this year, please apply again. Selection is extremely competitive -- you are competing with other top VA employees. Many LVA participants were not selected the first time they applied.

9. Show enthusiasm in your responses! Don't just go through the motions. The Screening Committee is able to see your enthusiasm just by reading your application.

10. Factors to consider in your application:

    a. Page 1, <u>Employment History</u> -- You should demonstrate progression in your career, including lateral moves and adjunct duties as well as vertical moves. Be sure you indicate a brief description of your responsibilities for each position listed.

    b. Page 2, <u>Education</u> -- Show your educational achievements; they are looking for involvement that shows motivation and leadership, whatever the educational level. Include adult learning and alternate types of learning that show you actively seek to upgrade your skills and stay current in your field. If you have a foreign degree that may not be familiar to the screening committee, explain what its U.S. equivalent would be.

c. Page 2, <u>Best Skill/Outstanding Achievement</u>—Keep in mind the type of leadership that VA is looking for (team-oriented, collaborative, innovative, etc.) and focus on the skills you can demonstrate that fit the needs of the "new VA."

d. Page 3, <u>Professional/Community Involvement</u> -- If you have not been involved in community activities, be sure you address this on the last block on this page.

e. Page 4, <u>Disadvantages/Hurdles</u>—This question gives you an opportunity to tell more about yourself. Are you a working parent? Caring for an elderly parent? Has gender or minority status made it difficult for you to climb the ranks? Is English a second language, or have you had to overcome a learning disability? Did you have to work full-time while going to school? The purpose of this question is to illustrate your motivation and ability to overcome setbacks in your career progression.

f. Page 4, <u>Three Most Pressing Issues</u> – This is the place to demonstrate your thinking about VA and its future. Again, take a broad approach, and explain your thoughts as clearly and concisely as you can. If English is your second language, you may want to ask a colleague or supervisor to read your response and give you feedback on how clearly you have expressed yourself.

g. Page 5, <u>Additional Information</u> -- What last impression do you want to show that demonstrates that you are a leader?

11.   Finally, use the application process as a self-assessment. Read over your application as if you were screening it, and see where you might need further development. Even if you are not accepted into **Leadership VA** this year, this process might spur you to find other development opportunities until next year's applications are announced.

Leadership VA - Tips for Interviewing

1. **Leadership VA** applicants whose application is ranked highly will be asked to complete a performance based interview (PBI) as part of the LVA selection process. The VA's "Performance Based Interviewing" web site (http://www.va.gov/pbi) is a great source of information on the PBI interview. Additionally, the VA Learning Catalog (vaww.sites.lrn.va.gov.vacatalog) has numerous offerings that one may want to consider. Use keyword "PBI".